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Cascade County Dispatchers Ready For New 911 Procedures

GREAT FALLS - Cascade County dispatchers are about to be much better equipped to respond to 911 calls, and that could make all the difference in an emergency.

Angee Ratliff, a dispatch supervisor, said, "We don't just do this job because we want to sit on the phone with you, we do want to help you and this gives us the better capability to do that."



With minimal time to respond and act, dispatchers work closely with a manual on how to deal with each circumstance.

The old emergency response book has been useful and saved many lives, but the new system - which is being handed down for free from King County, Washington - is expected to make Cascade County dispatchers even more efficient.

Dispatcher Megan Haynes said, "Just the fact that the book is prepared, that we can jump to that card and know exactly what help to give them, know exactly what questions to ask."

Ratliff said, "The old system was really rigid, and it required us to ask these set questions whether they were relevant or not, and the new system is saying that this dispatcher has received good training."

With new tabs, colors, and emergency response levels, the book will give more trust to the personnel behind the phone compared to the last program.

Ratliff noted, "It's not locking us into set of irrelevant questioning, and the irrelevant questions can be time consuming and delay your dispatch."

Dispatcher Peter Ingold added, "It allows us to provide much better service, get them the instruction that they need, reassurance that they need, let them know that the help is on the way."

Communications manager Bill Hunter said, "One of the worst things for a dispatcher is to get a call and somebody asking for help and not being able to do it, this gives us that ability."

The new system is expected to launch before the end of the month.

